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**Citizen or Stakeholder? Policies to
combat social exclusion and
promote social justice in the UK**

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41

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Ruth Lister

**Citizen or Stakeholder? Policies
to combat social exclusion and
promote social justice in the UK**

Preface

The papers in the paper series nos 40-42 were presented at the international workshop, **"Engendering Welfare States and Democratic Citizenship"**, organized by FREIA - Feminist Research Centre in Aalborg, 5-6 December, 1996.

The workshop was organized as a part of FREIA's Ph.D. programme **"Gender Relations - State, Market and Civil Society"**, which is integrated in the national Ph.D. programme: **"Meanings of Gender in an interdisciplinary perspective"**. It addressed Danish senior researchers and Ph.D. students within the Social Sciences. The conference was financed by the Department of Development and Planning, and the Social Science Faculty at Aalborg University.

The objective of the workshop was to analyse the problems engendering welfare states and democratic citizenship from different theoretical perspectives as well as from different policy contexts from the United Kingdom and Denmark. The aim was to understand the interconnection between gender and democracy as well as the potentials and problems for women's agency in the modern European welfare states.

A main purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the national and international cooperation between Ph.D. programmes in Gender Studies in the Social Sciences. And more specifically the aim was to develop the dialogue between international and Danish researchers working with Gender Research on Welfare States and Democracy. The two invited guests professor Ruth Lister from Loughborough University and Professor Anne Showstack Sassoon from Kingston University, who at the time was a Guest Professor in Feminist Research in the Social Sciences at FREIA, both participate in research networks and research projects with members of FREIA. They were each asked to present a theoretical paper and a more policy oriented paper, and members from FREIA as well as colleagues from the two Research Programmes "Welfare States" and "Democracy and Citizenship in Transition" at Aalborg University were invited as discussants.

FREIA is happy to be able to publish the three conference papers. The fourth paper by Anne Showstack Sassoon "Gender and Civil Society - A Critique of the Anglo-American Debate" has been published in a book that contains a the most recent collection of articles by members of FREIA: Christensen, Ravn & Rittenhofer eds. "Det Kønnede Samfund", (Gendered Society) Aalborg University Press 1997.

The programme of the workshop will be found at the end of this publication.

Birte Siim

1. Introduction

The future of welfare, and in particular the social security system, is very much on the UK political agenda in the 1990s. It is not, though, by and large a debate which is being conducted with reference to combatting social exclusion or promoting social justice. Rather, key concerns are to reduce 'welfare dependency' and the costs of welfare. In this paper I will look at:

- The context of the debate:
the direction of Conservative policies
their impact;
- The nature of the debate and the discourses in which it is conducted;
- The choices involved in more specific debates about the future of welfare;
- The broader economic and political dimensions with which they are interlinked.

2. The Context

i) The direction of Conservative policies

Since 1979 Conservative welfare policy has been framed by the twin objectives of reducing the role of the state and cutting or at least containing welfare spending. The key themes which have run through a never-ending set of reforms of the social security system are:

- *Promoting individual and family responsibility* - 'accepting responsibility for yourself and your family and not shuffling it off to the state' in Prime Minister, John Major's words. The main policy mechanisms have been the promotion of private insurance for eg pensions and attempts to shift 'dependency' from the public sphere of the state to the private sphere of the family through for instance the withdrawal of the right to social assistance from young people;
- *'Targeting'* help on those in most need primarily through greater emphasis on means-testing but more recently also through tighter definitions of need and of entitlement and stricter conditions and enforcement of these conditions;

- *Improving work incentives* - most notably through a long series of cuts in and restrictions on the benefits paid to unemployed people. These have culminated in the replacement of contributory unemployment benefit, paid for 12 months, by a jobseekers allowance, contributory for 6 months and meanstested after that. Entitlement depends on signing a job-seekers agreement which can involve strict conditions on behaviour and even appearance ie anything which might affect the chances of getting a job.
- Combatting fraud and 'abuse'. Social security fraud has become something of an obsession, with one crackdown after another. Measures to prevent 'abuse' have been targeted in particular on people from abroad, most recently in the form of a drastic curtailment in the rights of asylum-seekers which generated a widespread outcry and challenges in the courts.

Parallel with these social security policies have been tax and labour market reforms which have:

- shifted the burden of taxation from direct to indirect taxes and made the tax system overall less progressive, to the advantage of the highest income groups and the disadvantage of the lowest income;
- removed employment rights and in particular abolished the wages councils which provided a degree of protection against exploitative wages in a number of industries - women and minority ethnic groups have been worst hit.

ii) The impact

These policies have served to aggravate underlying changes in the labour market which are contributing to high levels of unemployment and greater job insecurity. The result has been that the increase in income inequality during the 1980s was faster than in any other country except New Zealand;

- Between 1979 and 1992/3, official figures show that real income after housing costs fell for the bottom decile by 18% and rose by 61% for the top decile; the increase for the total population was 37%.
- The numbers living below half average household income (after housing costs), the common proxy for a poverty line, rose, over the same period, from 5 to 14. 1million ie from 9% to 25% of the population. For children,

the figures were even worse: from 1.4m to 4.3m or 10% to 33% of all children.

One consequence has been that homelessness and begging have become increasingly common features of our city streets. An Enquiry, sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, on which sat the then Director General of the Confederation of British Industries amongst others, warned that these trends are damaging social cohesion and the very fabric of society:

As the gaps between rich and poor grown, the problems of the marginalised groups which are being left behind rebound on the more comfortable majority. Just as in the last century it was in the interests of all to introduce public health measures to combat the spread of infectious physical diseases fostered by poverty, so in this century it is in the interests of all to remove the factors which are fostering the social diseases of drugs, crime, political extremism, and social unrest' (1995).

3. Current Debates

The notion that we are living in a 'fragmented' society is taking hold. But the structural forces which have fuelled social and economic fragmentation are largely in the background rather than the foreground of political debate. Thus the debate as to what can be done to promote social integration is increasingly being couched in moralistic terms, focusing on behaviour and values. 'Family values' 'family breakdown', the breakdown of discipline in schools, crime; these are the stuff of political and media debate at present. Central to much of this debate is concern about the growing number of children being raised by lone mothers. The proportion of families headed by a lone parent (nine out of ten of whom are women) rose from 12% in 1979 to 21% in 1992. Over the same period the proportion of lone parents reliant on social assistance rose from 38 to 70 per cent as the proportion in work fell from 47 to 42 per cent. This contrasts with a rise in the proportion of married mothers in paid work from 52 to 63%.

How has the Labour Opposition responded to such developments and to 17 years of Thatcherism and post-Thatcherism? During the 1980s there was a widespread sense that the Right had captured the intellectual battle ground through its neoliberal ideology of the market and the individual. John Gray (1996), a Thatcherite apostate, has recently declared that

the neoliberal hegemony in Britain is over....It is nevertheless a fundamental mistake to imagine that the intellectual battle against the New Right has been won completely or irreversibly. As yet, the decline of the neoliberal consensus has not been accompanied by the rise of any successor to it.

In the late 1980s, it was said that the Left needed a 'big idea' to weaken the intellectual and political stranglehold of the New Right. There have been a number of candidates, none of which has really succeeded in lighting the political fuse.

The first was probably *citizenship*. Raymond (now Lord) Plant was instrumental in promoting citizenship as a means of reconciling the collectivist tradition of the left with the individual and his or her rights (marking out a very different terrain from the Conservatives 'active' citizenship and citizens charter). Tony Blair, in his first exposition of the meaning of socialism, on taking up the leadership of the Labour Party, set out his interpretation of the 'Left view of citizenship, and included 'the equal worth of each citizen' as one of the values of democratic socialism. In the event citizenship was not adopted as the 'big idea'. Nevertheless, the language of citizenship permeates important texts on the centre-left, most notably Will Hutton's best-selling *The State We're In*.

Blair's articulation of a Left view of citizenship was about not just rights but also the duties which individuals 'owe to one another and a broader society'. Subsequently, influenced by the popular communitarianism of writers such as Amitai Etzioni and David Selbourne, the emphasis has been more and more on obligations and responsibilities to the wider community. *Community* has

certainly been one of the candidates for the big idea. As Gray argues, communitarian thought provides a corrective to neoliberal conceptions of the individual and the market. But, he also points to the dangers of its popular manifestations which appear to hark back to traditional forms of social life; to ignore cultural and other divisions within communities (although he does not specify them, these include gender divisions); and to gloss over economic inequalities.

Earlier this year, Blair took up the idea of a *stakeholder* society, which had been promoted by Hutton amongst others. In a much quoted speech, given in Singapore in January, he said 'we need a country in which we acknowledge an obligation collectively to ensure each citizen gets a stake in it'. He called for a stakeholder economy which involves all our people' and a stakeholder welfare system in which all have a stake and which is based on an active rather than a passive conception of welfare. According to Hutton, 'The key stakeholder value is inclusion, rather than the equality sought by the Old Left or the individual autonomy of the New Right' (Kay and Hutton, 1996). Suddenly everyone was talking and writing about stakeholding, with varying degrees of scepticism and enthusiasm on the left.

Yet, come the Autumn Labour Party Conference, stakeholding was notable for its absence from Blair's big setpiece speech. It has been suggested that while Blair was happy to deploy the rhetoric of stakeholding he had never intended to identify with its more specific meaning as promoted by Hutton: ie the German model in which the stake of not only shareholders is recognised in company law. So as enthusiasm for stakeholding wanes, the next candidate for Blair's big idea is 'the *decent society*'. In a recent speech in South Africa he spelt out his vision of a 'decent society', built on the values of strong family units of which responsibilities are the most fundamental. This, it has been suggested by Charles Leadbeater (1996), a political commentator for the *New Statesman*, offers a rich seam of ideas for Blair. Decency, it would seem, is being promoted as a broader and more realisable goal than social justice - though whether it is an adequate substitute for social justice is, I would argue, another matter. The rapid taking up and discarding of a series of potential 'big ideas' is symptomatic of what another *New Statesman* commentator, John Lloyd (1996),

describes as the 'forward march of new Labour'. This he observes has been 'so rapid under Blair that a whole series of positions that seemed amenable to its "project" in its early stages - that whole age that was a year ago - have now been leapfrogged, and with them their advocates'. This includes the independent Commission on Social Justice, established by Blair's predecessor, the late John Smith to advise the Labour Party on strategies to promote social justice. The Commission, of which I was a member, reported late 1994. To quote from its conclusion:

In our proposals for lifelong learning, for full employment in a modern economy and a new balance between paid and unpaid work, for a new social insurance system and secure pension arrangements, for the development of health and community care, and the revival of distressed communities, we have set out the principles and objectives that should guide government over the long term, as well as the steps towards these objectives that can be taken in the short and medium terms' (CSJ, 1994).

It received a mixed reception. Many on the left saw it as offering a real way forward, and one which recognised the changes that have taken place in employment and family life and which put the concerns of women at its centre (cf Anne's paper later). Others accused it of embracing a modernisers' agenda which would do little to reverse the growing divide between rich and poor. Today it is being used as a benchmark by the media and others against which to judge Labour's emerging policies and it looks more 'Old' Labour than 'New' in this context.

4. Welfare choices

I will elaborate by looking at some of the more specific debates today about welfare policy; the issues they raise; and relate these back to the positions of both the CSJ and the Labour Party. I will do so in relation to 4 key sets of choices which, although I will set them out in either/or terms are more a question of positions on a continuum. They are: public vs private provision; universal vs meanstested provision; passive vs active policies; conditional vs

unconditional benefits. And I will end with some more general observations about taxation and redistribution.

i) Public vs private provision

The issue of the balance between public and private welfare provision is becoming increasingly critical, especially in the area of pensions provision. On the far right there are various proposals to phase out social insurance in favour of private insurance, backed up by a residual state assistance scheme. As noted already, the government itself has been pursuing policies aimed at encouraging more people to take out private insurance especially in the areas of pensions and mortgage protection. And now there are influential people in the Labour Party arguing for compulsory private insurance as the best way of promoting 'stake-holding' in welfare. It might well do so for those who can afford the premiums, but for the significant minority who will not be able to buy their stakes and whose premiums will have to be paid for out of taxation, arguably it could drive a wedge between them and 'the taxpayer' rather than promote solidarity.

The CSJ, whilst endorsing a mixed economy of welfare and recognising a role for private provision, made clear that it is not a substitute for a comprehensive, modernised social insurance system on the grounds that social insurance:

- protects people more cheaply, efficiently and fairly than private insurance;
- plays a key role in helping people redistribute income over their increasingly varied life-cycle (though compulsory private insurance could also do this);
- represents an expression of social citizenship in its balance of rights and responsibilities through an ethic of mutuality;
- exemplifies the approach prioritised by most of our EU partners.

Thus, the centrepiece of its proposals for welfare reform was a modernised, more inclusionary social insurance system better attuned to contemporary employment and family patterns and especially the position of women. Part-time workers, in particular, would enjoy new rights and in the longer term, it

was suggested, social insurance could cover new contingencies such as parental leave and learning sabbaticals.

ii) Universalism vs targeting

When the CSJ was set up the media and many on the left as well as the right saw its main task as getting Labour off the hook of its traditional commitment to universalism, in the name of modernisation. Instead, the Commission aimed to demonstrate that it is means-testing and not universalism which is anachronistic, for the former, it argued, is ill-suited to modern conditions of rapid change, fluctuating incomes and insecurity. Moreover, because it is based on the joint incomes of couples, it threatens to undermine women's financial independence and means that one partner's economic activity affects the other's benefit entitlement.

Furthermore, the experience of the US suggests that a residual means-tested safety net as the centre-piece of a country's income maintenance strategy, which is the direction in which current government policy is taking us, will not necessarily, as claimed, target more resources on the poor. Instead it is likely to marginalise the poor and their interests even further as the rest of society no longer has any stake in the welfare system. Means tests thus, many would argue, represent a force for social exclusion rather than inclusion.

The Labour Party is still opposed to means-testing in principle but the policies to emerge so far show no signs of turning principle into practice. In particular, it has proposed withdrawing non means-tested child benefit from 16 to 18 year olds who stay on in education in order to finance a means-tested education and training allowance, the details of which are still very unclear. It has also gone back on an earlier commitment to abolish the job seeker's allowance which has replaced unemployment benefit. In a recent policy document, it observes that the introduction of the JSA 'has fundamentally undermined the insurance principle. Yet on the next page there is no more than a weak commitment to review its workings.

iii) Passive vs active policies

The reason it has refused to commit itself to abolition of JSA lies partly in a wider avoidance of spending commitments, with their implications for tax levels, in the run up to the Election. But it also reflects a concern to disassociate New Labour from any policy that smacks of encouraging welfare 'dependency'. The language of welfare dependency, with its stigmatising connotations, is now used freely by Labour as well as Conservative politicians, yet the academic research has yet to provide evidence of the 'dependency' culture which they deplore.

Labour's social security policy is centred on a 'welfare-to-work' strategy which is premised on the belief that paid work represents the best route of poverty. The strategy is designed to remove the obstacles within the benefits system itself which make it difficult for those trying to get back into work and to help with job search, work experience and skills development. It is partly modelled on the Australian Jobs Education and Training (JET) scheme to offer a personalised Personal Development and Guidance Service for those affected by or at risk of long term unemployment and also for lone parent families. However, unlike the Australian scheme there is no commitment to adequate child care facilities to back it up. It would be underpinned by a minimum wage, the level of which is a source of some controversy.

Welfare to work has become the new conventional wisdom, endorsed by all the political parties and all the major reports on welfare reform in recent years. It formed a central plank of the CSJ Report and, indeed, the Labour Party's welfare to work strategy draws heavily on the Commission's ideas. However, in the CSJ Report it was balanced by the parallel plank of its proposals for the modernisation of social insurance and also by a rather vaguer acknowledgement of the need to tackle the poverty experienced by those still reliant on benefit through, for instance, support for a benchmark minimum income standard.

In New Labour thinking, however, proposals for better benefits are dismissed as 'old fashioned' and as in danger of promoting welfare dependency. Thus, welfare to work and its associated policies is cast as 'active' (good) and policies to improve benefits themselves as 'passive' (bad). But this is to set up a false dichotomy. Many of us have argued for years, that poverty needs to be tackled

at its source, which for many is in the labour market. But that does not have to be at the expense of doing something for those who for whatever reason cannot move from welfare to work in either the shorter or longer term. Moreover, we cannot be sure that the work opportunities will be there for all who want them. Adrian Sinfield (1996) has criticised this way of thinking which is reflected in OECD policies:

The distinction between training and employment measures as 'active' and benefits for the unemployed as 'passive' may have been appropriate at a time when unemployment was low, and there was a strong commitment to keeping it low. But, when unemployment is high, and remains high so that many are experiencing long and/or frequent periods out of work, the distinction becomes misleading because it helps to obscure the active role that may be played by a good system of benefits for the unemployed. It may lead to a neglect of the multiple functions of the benefits system with the result that cuts may be made in ways which are positively harmful, both for the individual and the wide society. It may also help to obscure the fact that, when there are not enough jobs, some training and retraining schemes may not be fulfilling any positive function but simply recycling some of the most vulnerable unemployed in a way that at least may create disillusionment, if not apathy or alienation, and may serve to marginalise them further. In these and other ways the conventional distinction between 'active' and 'passive' may influence attitudes towards policies and priorities relating to unemployment and the unemployed.

iv. Conditional vs unconditional benefits

Related is the question of conditionality. Again, both current policy and Labour thinking is moving to an increasingly conditional stance. -The issue of conditionality goes to the heart of the question of the relationship between citizenship rights and obligations, and in particular work obligations. In a number of societies, European as well as US, there is increasing emphasis on work obligations as a badge of social inclusion and citizenship.

Workfare represents its most extreme form - and government policy is moving increasingly in that direction, especially with the new job-seeker's allowance and a number of pilot workfare-type schemes, which are about to be extended to cover nearly a third of the registered long term unemployed. The CSJ rejected workfare, primarily on the grounds that its emphasis on compulsion could be counter-productive. Rejection of workfare does not, however, it argued, necessarily mean rejection of all notions of responsibility amongst unemployed benefit recipients to take available suitable work or engage in training. We need to distinguish between this principle and the UK government's increasingly punitive interpretation of it.

Where the CSJ went, controversially, further than the present government was in its recommendation that parents of older children should be required to be available for part-time work, provided adequate child care facilities were available and subject to various other safeguards. The proposal would only be activated in the context of the successful introduction of a JET-type package . This has been interpreted in some quarters as an attack on the rights of lone mothers. However, the UK is very unusual in allowing lone parents to remain on social assistance until their youngest child is aged 16 and it is debateable whether such a liberal rule is actually in their own interests. The evidence of the long term damage done to the economic interests of women absent from the labour market for long stretches means we have to question whether we are doing lone mothers any favours by assuming that they can continue to remain outside the labour market for so long.

At a time when actual policy is moving towards greater conditionality in a number of countries, there is growing support, in some quarters (more academic than political), for a policy which stands at the other end of the continuum: citizens income (CI) which would be paid to each individual without any conditions attached. For many of its advocates, it represents the ultimate expression of citizenship and social inclusion. Also, it is well suited to part time work and ensures an independent income for women. However, there are also problems including its political acceptability and economic feasibility and arguably it upsets the reciprocal balance between rights and obligations.

Although the CSJ did not endorse it as an immediate strategy, it did advise against ruling out a move towards CI in the longer term and in the mean time gave support to the idea of a 'participation income' which goes some way towards CI. Where appropriate, the income would be conditional on some form of active social contribution, defined more broadly than paid employment to cover care and, in some versions, voluntary work.

The idea of a participation income goes some way towards addressing one of the tensions with which the CSJ had to grapple: how to balance the imperatives of a strategy predicated on the central importance of paid work to tackling social exclusion with recognition of the value of unpaid caring work. Linked to this is the question of how best to ensure an independent income for those providing care (still mainly women) through the benefits system, without at the same time reinforcing the gendered division of labour, thereby locking women further into caring responsibilities in the 'private' sphere and out of full participation in the 'public' sphere and potential economic and political autonomy. Part of the answer has to lie in policies which address men's absenteeism from the responsibilities of care such as have been attempted by some Scandinavian countries. The CSJ report recognised that what was at issue was not just the distribution of income between women and men but also the distribution of paid and unpaid work and time.

5. Conclusion: wider economic and political issues

Social security, of course, represents only one prong in a strategy to combat social exclusion and promote social justice. It is closely interlinked with wider economic, fiscal and political approaches. On the *economic and fiscal* side, I would make three main points:

First, there is a growing tendency to abdicate responsibility for inclusionary economic/social policies in the face of global economic forces. Whilst it may be true that these forces limit the power of nation states to set their own economic and social agendas (though some would query even this), this should not become an alibi for inaction, a point underlined by Paul Hirst and Graham

Thompson (1996) in their recent critical study of the notion of globalisation. As the Joseph Rowntree Inquiry into Income and Wealth argued, although 'policy-makers have to operate under constraints set by global forces, which may well be tighter than in the past, we do not believe that they have lost all freedom of manoeuvre' (1995, p 38).

Secondly, I would point to the need for the kinds of policies advocated by the CSJ to create a more inclusionary labour market by breaking down the main barriers which exclude from or marginalise in the labour market disadvantaged groups:

- as mentioned already, a jobs, education and training (JET) programme directed primarily towards the long term unemployed and lone parents but as part of a broader priority given to investment in life long learning and training;
- the expansion of high quality and affordable child care facilities together with the development of family-friendly employment policies;
- the strengthening of anti-discrimination measures
- the guarantee of adequate rewards from employment through a statutory minimum wage and strengthened employment rights.

Thirdly, is what has become a deeply unfashionable notion in the UK that we might once again use the tax system as an instrument of redistribution towards the excluded and as a mechanism for social inclusion and an expression of citizenship. The CSJ Report may not have gone as far as some would have liked in its recommendations for a fairer tax system but it did reiterate 'an old principle: taxes are the contribution that we all make towards building a better society. Taxation in a democratic society is based upon consent; it is a desirable good, not a necessary evil....fair taxes, wisely and efficiently used, are a responsibility we should share and accept' (CSJ, 1994, p 376). Unfortunately, in trying to compete with the Tories as the party of low taxation, Labour is in danger of losing sight of this principle and of reinforcing the increasingly dominant view of taxation as inherently undesirable, instead of educating people as to why some of us may need to pay more in taxation to make possible the kind of society many of us would like to live in.

Taxation is a central political issue yet it has become practically taboo in public debate. Turning now to the *political* dimension, I will focus on inclusion as a political process which needs to involve the excluded themselves. This also means understanding citizenship not just as a question of rights but as an active process of political participation (broadly defined).

In its outreach visits the CSJ took inspiration from the many examples of such active citizenship that it witnessed in some of the most deprived communities, often spearheaded by women. In order to enhance this culture of active citizenship the Commission put forward various proposals to promote bottom-up community regeneration, including the establishment of community development trusts. Support for such trusts also came from the Northern Ireland Opsahl Commission (Pollak, 1993). They were defined by one Northern Ireland community group as an independent, not for profit organisation which takes action to renew an area physically, socially and in spirit. It brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors....[and] it encourages substantial involvement by local people’.

Also from Northern Ireland, the Democratic Dialogue report on social exclusion, social inclusion emphasises the importance of a vibrant civil society as a public forum for excluded groups and suggests that resources and leadership training should be made available to them (Wilson, 1995). This sometimes needs to be more basic for example at the level of assertiveness training and confidence-building.

Similarly, there is growing recognition in some quarters of the importance of user-involvement in welfare services as an expression of active rather than more passive forms of social citizenship. Such initiatives are about giving voice to groups who are normally treated simply as the objects of welfare policies and whose voice is largely excluded from political debates.

We are seeing an intensification of processes of political exclusion alongside social and economic exclusion. There has always been a tendency for politics and political programmes to marginalise the concerns of those in poverty. This tendency has increased in recent years as elections are fought more and more

around the marginal seats which by and large are not in the poorest areas. Clearly Labour faces a dilemma. It has to appeal beyond its traditional constituency and convince 'middle England' that it has its interests at heart. But in doing so, there is a danger that no one will speak for those at the bottom.

J. K. Galbraith (1994) has observed how the contented majority (though perhaps they too are increasingly less contented in face of growing economic insecurity) 'rule under the rich cloak of democracy, a democracy in which the less fortunate do not participate. He was speaking of the exclusion of the poor, but the rich cloak of democracy also hides the extent to which social divisions of gender, race and disability translate into political exclusions behind it. This points to the need to open up political space to 'the excluded' both by making formal politics more open to informal, community-based, forms of politics and by opening formal politics up to groups and individuals currently marginalised. In this way, deprived individuals and communities can also become political stakeholders.

To conclude, I would echo Will Hutton's emphasis on the inter-relationships between the economic, social and political aspects of a strategy to combat social exclusion and promote social justice and between the different components of citizenship. In his review of the SJC report he wrote of 'the point/counterpoint between the economic, social and political that must be at the heart of any reform programme' (Hutton, 1994). We are still some way from achieving this counterpoint in the kind of strategies being put forward as an alternative to those which have divided UK society over the past 17 years.

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